PITTA

Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 18 Number 11 November 2021 (Special Issue)

SPECIAL ISSUE
WEST BENGAL

Editor's note

Some of our members had been to West Bengal for a nine-day birding trip from January 23rd to 31st, 2021. In this Special Issue of the Pitta, we are happy to bring you an account of the trip, along with a number of colourful photographs. We hope you will find this Special Issue interesting.

Report: West Bengal, January 23-31, 2021

Umesh Mani

Short-eared Owl (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

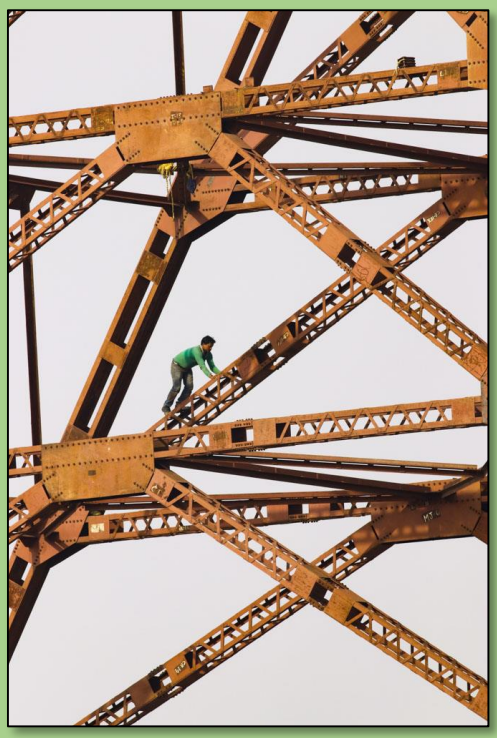
Late January 2021 saw 6 of us setting out on a much-awaited 10-day trip to some hotspots of West Bengal – Gajoldoba, Latpanchar & Mahananda WLS. The group included Lawrence, Srikanth and his wife Sravani, and myself, besides two other friends, Kumar Kanchu, better known as KK, and Ashish.

Thanks to the airline rescheduling the flights several times, we arrived at Bagdogra airport after a lot of confusion, and I actually ended up reaching Siliguri one day before the rest of the gang! Anyway, the excitement of the trip ensured that we weathered all these hiccups, and we started the trip on January 23, 2021, with a lot of anticipation.

Day-1: January 23, 2021

As per the program chalked out by the guide, the actual trip was to start only on the morning of January 24. However, we could not bring ourselves to sit around in the hotel for half a day and just wait for the next morning! So, on reaching the hotel in Gajoldoba – our first port of call – we checked into our rooms, had a quick lunch and prevailed upon the guide to take us birding for a couple of hours at least.

Osprey (Photo: Umesh Mani)



Man climbing pylon (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Right outside the hotel, we saw an Osprey and a Lesser Adjutant in flight – a great way to start. We also saw a man climbing a pylon with no safety gear whatsoever, leaving us wondering how we can be so casual about safety issues.

Black-hooded Oriole (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We walked along a canal for a bit, notching up some nice species like the Blue-throated Barbet, Black-hooded Oriole and House Sparrow, and soon reached the Teesta Barrage. It is a popular hangout point for the public on holidays, as well as a tourist attraction in the area – but it is also home to some of the most beautiful ducks and other waterbirds we get to see in India. However, they do generally tend to stay far away from the madding crowd – so we got to see only a few species this evening. Well, I say 'only a few' – but what an appetizer they were for the rest of the trip!

Black-necked Grebe (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We took a walk on the barrage, and on a bund nearby, which is the launching point for the boats that were to be our ride for the next two days. Our sightings that day included Great Crested and Black-necked Grebes, both wonderful species, a couple of Common Teals and some distant Tufted Ducks, besides some of the usual suspects – Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Eurasian Wigeon, Little and Great Cormorant, etc etc – and good numbers of Ruddy Shelducks. We also saw a female Pied Harrier, a Eurasian Marsh Harrier and an Osprey in flight.

Pied Harrier female (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Being still the rear end of winter up north, it was fairly chilly, and also got dark by around 5.30PM. So we wound up our wanderings and headed back to the hotel for some rest, repast and rejuvenation. This was, however, interrupted by a flutter of action caused by an Indian Scops Owl that decided to first come and perch very close to our balcony, and then lead us on a bit of a dance among the trees within the resort premises. Having got a few record shots, we retired to our rooms again, tired but excited about the coming adventures.

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Day-2: January 24, 2021: Gajoldoba (Teesta Barrage)

Day-2, the first full day of the trip, saw us up and ready at the appointed time of 6.30AM, only to find that it was quite foggy and we could not see anything! Anyway, we decided to head to the barrage and wait there rather than hang around in our rooms. That, at least, enabled us to warm ourselves with a cup of hot *chai* while we waited for the fog to clear.

Spangled Drongo (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Near the tea shops, we got views of a couple of early risers – a Spangled Drongo and a Black-hooded Oriole. After about an hour of restless waiting – we were naturally chomping at the bit, knowing what treasures the lake had to offer – we were finally able to head to the embarkation point and board the boats.

My initial reaction at the first sight of the boats was, well, a kind of sinking feeling! The boats were small – really small – and could just about accommodate two people along with gear; and once you sat down, there wasn't much room to move anywhere – we were kind of wedged into place. Any significant sideways movement would lead to the boat tilting dangerously towards the water. I could foresee that we would return at the end of the day, sore and weary, and with unknown muscles called into action as we twisted this way and that, trying to capture photographs of all the birds!

However, the anticipation outweighed all these pinpricks of concern, and we took off into the lake. Our group was divided into three boats. The boats were 'silent' boats – there was a boatman in each boat, who basically pushed the boat along using a long bamboo pole. A word about the lake itself – it is formed by the accumulation of water behind the barrage, and includes a variety of mini-habitats. There are large vistas of reeds, some grassy stretches, some rocky patches and several small islands and sandbars. Naturally, this means that there is suitable habitat for a wide variety of species.

White-capped Water Redstart (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We had already been greeted by a White-capped Water Redstart which had actually been hopping around inside and on top of the boats that were tied up at the bank. As we started, we could see a small group of ducks a short distance away, not very clear through the remnants of fog. As we approached, we realized that they were Red-crested Pochards and Tufted Ducks! While we do get both species down south too – albeit in smaller numbers – I don't think I have ever got such a close look at either of these. While the Tufted Ducks were slightly jittery and would fly off every time we approached, to settle a short distance away, the Red-crested Pochards were a lot more tolerant, and would only swim away slowly, maintaining a sort of constant distance between themselves and us. There was also a lone Great Crested Grebe. We took a few photographs for the record, as best as we could in the conditions, and decided to leave the photography for later, once the light was better.

Sand Lark (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Little Cormorant (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Moving along, we saw a handful of River Lapwings on the grass, an Olive-backed Pipit and a few Pacific Golden Plovers. There was also the odd Grey-headed Swamphen and a couple of Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacanas. Some way ahead, on the sandbars and in the waters, we saw a Sand Lark that stubbornly refused to turn towards us, a Black-necked Grebe, a Common Greenshank, a lovely specimen of Little Cormorant and a few Ruddy Shelducks. We then came upon a small flock of what would be my first lifer of the trip – the beautiful Northern Lapwing. The flock was a little distant and, assuring us that we would get them much closer later, our guide advised that we press on for our major objective for the day.

Reluctantly leaving the Northern Lapwings behind, we moved on, seeing in flight *en route* a few Black-tailed Godwits, a Black-eared Kite and a Steppe Eagle. Then we reached the location where we were hoping to get the first of the 'big' species of the trip. After almost half an hour with not a bird in sight, we were on tenterhooks – had our target bird decided to give it a miss today?

Suddenly one of the boatmen – who all seemed to have a pretty good knowledge of the birds of the area – called out something in Bengali and pointed at something way off in the distance. The other boatmen and the guide all came alive, and we immediately started moving ahead. And then we finally saw what we had been waiting for – the Common Merganser!

Common Merganser male (Photo: Umesh Mani)

It was a beautiful male, and our guide told us that we were lucky to get it – apparently it is the female that is seen more easily, and they had not got the male during the past few outings. Of course, it does not allow very close approaches, so we had to be content with views and photographs from a fair distance. But we were happy at getting one of the species that, for so many years, we had only seen in the books.

Once the male flew away, we settled down to wait, hoping that it would come back in a while and possibly bring the female along. While waiting, we had a breakfast that was unusual but strangely fitting in the circumstances – *chapatis* and chicken curry! Apparently it was the done thing here. Just as we finished, we saw a Harrier overhead that turned out to be the rare Hen Harrier! It was quite thrilling to see this bird – I think I was seeing it after some 10-12 years.

Hen Harrier female (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Having waited for almost an hour with no sign of the Merganser returning, we decided to move back and start looking for other species. On the way, we saw a group of four Black-eared Kites on a sandbar, one of which seemed to be eating something. We edged closer and were horrified to see that the Kite was trying to get at something from inside a packet of potato chips! It was very disturbing to see such a pristine habitat marred by human garbage – a sad commentary on how we treat our environment.

Steppe Eagle (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Anyway, after a few minutes, we moved on. The guide told us that there was an island where a Short-eared Owl was often seen sitting at the edge of the water – an enticing vision. *En route* to that point, we heard the call of a Striated Grassbird but could not see it. Soon, we came to the location, and to our excitement, we did manage to see the Owl sitting near the water. It took off quickly, however, and moved some distance away. There were some other people in another boat who were also chasing this owl, so it kept flying around from place to place, giving us some nice views in the process.

Short-eared Owl (Photo: Umesh Mani)

After some time, we got back to the boats and headed towards the main lake. We could see a couple of sandbars that seemed to be loaded with waders. One of our boats stopped at the first sandbar, which had a large flock of Pacific Golden Plovers and, amidst them, a number of smaller waders – notable among them was the Dunlin.

Dunlin (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Northern Lapwing (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We – the two people in my boat, that is – decided to move on to the next sandbar, and were overwhelmed to see that the flock out there comprised of Northern Lapwings – over 200 of them! What a way to get a lifer – 200 at a time – it was unbelievable.

Northern Lapwing (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

The Northern Lapwings were also quite confiding, and allowed us to approach pretty close in the boats. And as they would turn, the sun, hitting them at different angles, would bring out different colours. As a result, we were able to get some really nice photos of the Lapwings. And when they took off in a cloud, it was a rainbow of flashing metallic colours flying around us – a magnificent, unforgettable sight.

Having photographed them to our heart's content – well, maybe not exactly content, but reasonably satisfied! – we moved ahead, and were rewarded with a mega-bonus. The female Mergansers, which had refused to put in an appearance earlier in the morning, had turned up right here! Of course, true to their nature, they kept moving away as we approached. They also generally keep a very low profile in the water, and it was not easy photographing them in between the waves from a bobbing boat, so we had to be satisfied with decent photos from a distance; some of us were unfortunate to miss out because they had taken a bit of time to get here after the Lapwings.

Common Merganser female (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

River Lapwing (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Ruddy Shelduck (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Citrine Wagtail (Photo: Umesh Mani)

By this time it was getting on for 3.00PM – time for the boat ride to end. So we started moving back to shore, photographing some of the numerous Ruddy Shelducks along the way. Most of the ducks here seemed to be generally quite accommodating – I don't think I have ever got so close to them in all my 15 years of birding. We also saw a Siberian Stonechat, a beautiful River Lapwing that allowed us quite close, a Citrine Wagtail, and some more Tufted Ducks.

After that, we reached the shore and disembarked, tired but quite happy that our major target for the day – the Common Merganser – had been achieved, along with some other awesome species like the Northern Lapwing.

It was now time for some food – and what else could satisfy some hungry souls better than that staple of winter birding up north – piping hot Maggi! It gets dark fairly early here during winter so, having refreshed ourselves with Maggi and *chai*, we moved back to our rooms, winding up for the day.

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Day-3: January 25, 2021: Gajoldoba

A ghostly boatman in the thick fog (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Day-3 dawned not-so-bright and not-so-early – although we were ready at 6.30AM and had reached the *chai* shops near the boarding point soon after, we were forced to delay our start till almost 8.00AM because the fog was impenetrable. It was so bad that we couldn't see more than 10 feet, and we were beginning to worry that the day's birding was going to be affected.

Today was another important day, because some of the key duck species were on the target list today. So, once some sunlight started filtering through, we decided to start, reasoning that by the time we got to the right locations, it would be brighter and the fog would have cleared to some extent. We were given a morning welcome by a Spotted Owlet that was perching on a tree right next to the boats. And, as always, the Tufted Ducks and Red-crested Pochards were there to greet us. Since today was 'duck day', we spent a little time photographing these ducks before moving on.

Tufted Duck (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Red-crested Pochard male (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Gadwall female (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The next patch, marked by some reeds and other aquatic vegetation, yielded some Northern Pintails, Common Teals – and Gadwalls! Again, they usually don't allow close approaches, and I was pleasantly surprised that we got reasonably close. There were also a few Eurasian Wigeons, Tufted Ducks, and a Tricolored Shrike on a bush.

Eurasian Wigeon (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

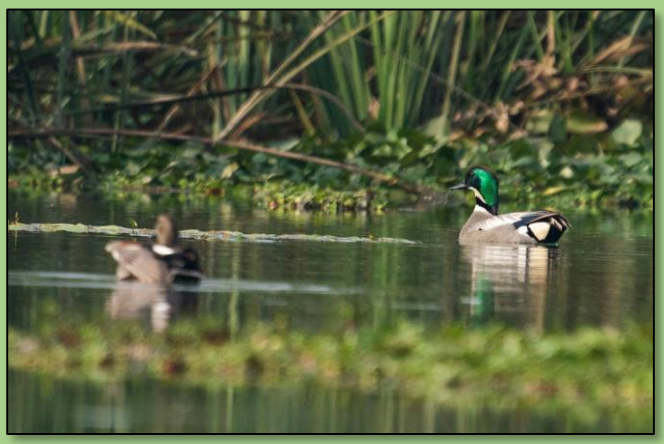
We then took off on a half-hour ride without any major sightings *en route*, and reached another part of the lake, where we got our first mega-sighting of the day – a pair of Common Goldeneyes! This is a really big species to find, since it comes in small numbers, and more importantly, is hyper-sensitive – it seems to take off even when you are a hundred metres away! – making it practically impossible to see and photograph well. We managed to get a few record shots before they took off again, and it was impossible to track them since it was still quite hazy over the water.

Common Goldeneye pair (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We waited for a while, hoping they would come back to the area we had seen them in, and they did give us a couple of fly-bys, but did not settle down. We then decided to go ahead and look for other birds. As usual, Red-crested Pochards, Tufted Ducks and Ruddy Shelducks were plentiful, as also the odd Eurasian Wigeon, River and Red-wattled Lapwings, Asian Pied Starlings etc. A flock of Gadwalls gave us a lovely view as they flew past – it was good to see them in a flock rather than as just individuals!

Gadwall flock (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We reached a part of the lake that had a lot of reeds – this was apparently the area where our next target bird was often seen. Eyes peeled, we were all straining to find the bird when the guide pointed to a pair of birds in the water and excitedly whispered, "*Shot maro, shot maro*!" At the time, two of our boats were at the spot, and Srikanth and I shot off a flurry of photographs. On review, however, the guide said that what I had captured was a Common Teal female, and I was crest-fallen at having missed such an important species. It turned out later, when I was reviewing the photographs at home, that the guide and I had probably not been able to see the bird properly in the camera LCD – it can be difficult in the sunlight – and that I had, in fact, got the bird. Lawrence, in the third boat, had also got the bird, but from the other side of the reeds, when it took off. And we did get it 2-3 times later. So what WAS it? You can understand why it was such a big deal when I tell you that it was – the Falcated Duck!



Falcated Duck (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Falcated Duck (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

This bird is a winter visitor to northern India, but is quite difficult to photograph, given that it is incredibly shy and tends to take off very early when you try to approach. No wonder we were thrilled.

As we moved out from that area, we saw more of the usual ducks – Gadwalls, Ruddy Shelducks, Eurasian Wigeons, Common Teals, and Northern Shovelers, some in eclipse plumage – before we came upon some action – an aerial dogfight between a Greater Spotted Eagle and a male Pied Harrier! I personally could not get very good photographs, what with the distance and the bobbing boat – but I was happy that I had finally seen the male Pied Harrier, which had been eluding me all these years.

Greater Spotted Eagle (L) & Pied Harrier (R)
(Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Striated Grassbird (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

The reeds also yielded glimpses of the Striated Grassbird and the Golden-headed Cisticola, though Srikanth was the only one who managed to get any photographs. We got another fly-by from the Goldeneyes, enabling somewhat better photographs than earlier, and a Black-necked Grebe also gave good views.

We then headed back to the hotel for lunch and a short break, where I discovered that I was locked out because the room key was with Lawrence, who had been in the last boat and had not yet got back! I passed the time by photographing a Red Collared Dove and a Brown Shrike in the lawns, before we sat down to lunch, where we were visited by a Long-tailed Shrike.

Red Collared Dove (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The plan for the post-lunch session was to get a better look at the ducks, and of course to search for the Falcated Duck that we had 'missed' earlier. Back on the lake, we were rewarded for our persistence almost immediately – the Falcated Duck had come to 'our' part of the lake! We had to chase it around a bit before we could get some proper views, and some photographs for the record.

Northern Lapwing flock (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We got a fantastic fly-by from a large flock of the Northern Lapwings – it was beautiful! There were also small groups of Tufted Ducks, Eurasian Wigeons and Ruddy Shelducks, as usual, along with a couple of Gadwalls and Great Crested Grebes. Some of the Northern Pintails seemed to have longer tails than I have seen down south.

Northern Pintail (Photo: Umesh Mani)

This site is known for its records of the Smew and the Greater Scaup, two enigmatic ducks that had been visiting this lake the past couple of years, but had not been seen this year. Obviously, these were on top of our list too. However, we were not fortunate enough to see them. There were a number of false alarms, because some Tufted Duck females do show a Scaup-like white face patch (9993) – and whenever we saw any of these, we kept getting excited and then deflated!

Tufted Duck with Scaup-like head (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Anyway, that was it for the day, more or less, barring another distant look at the Common Goldeneyes. As we turned back for the ride home, we saw a huge flock of Common Greenshanks, some Common Teals that allowed us fairly close, some Common Redshanks and some more River Lapwings. The Red-crested Pochards, as always, were cooperative.

We saw some baskets that had been strung up on one of the bushes – an ingenious contraption that was apparently used to catch fish!

Baskets used for catching fish (Photo: Umesh Mani)

When we reached the bund where the boats would be tied up, we were surprised to see that the Spotted Owlet that had seen us off in the morning was still sitting in the same tree, dozing – we wondered if it had spent the whole day sitting there!

Spotted Owlet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Common Redshank (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Tomorrow would be another day – our last day here before we moved to our next location – but for now, we were satisfied with what we had got during a good day of birding. We drove back to the hotel, riding in the e-rickshaws that are the norm here – a good, environment-friendly measure.

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Day-4: January 26, 2021: Gajoldoba & Latpanchar

Today was the day we had to move to our next location, Latpanchar. But of course, we wanted to get in a morning session of birding at Gajoldoba before leaving – and there were still a couple of important species we had not yet got! So we got ready early as usual and were at the boating point by 7.30AM.

Great Crested Grebe (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

We got the customary sendoff by the White-capped Water Redstart, and the Red-crested Pochards, Tufted Ducks and the Great Crested Grebe gave good views. But today our focus was different, so we pushed off to another part of the lake, clocking *en route* the Wigeons, Common Teals, Gadwalls, a Bronze-winged Jacana, a Siberian Stonechat and a group of four Great Crested Grebes.

Bronze-winged Jacana juvenile
(Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

We then saw something we had not seen from day-1 – the Common Coot. But we did not tarry there – we had more important species to find! We came across a group of Common Pochards but, though we wanted to approach closer, we decided to press on.

And then we spied what we had been looking for. Interspersed between the Wigeons, Gadwalls, Coots and Tufted Ducks was a dark brown bird with a white rump, silvery bill and striking white eyes – the Ferruginous Duck! We moved closer, but the bird seemed to be a little jittery and kept flying off. But we did not give up – we kept tracking where it went to, and finally it allowed us to approach somewhat close and take a few decent photographs.

Ferruginous Duck male (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Ferruginous Duck female (Photo: Umesh Mani)

It was now getting on for our onward journey, so we turned our boats back towards the jetty. We saw some Common Pochards from fairly close, and a couple of Grey-headed Lapwings, besides some of the commoners – White-breasted Waterhen, Grey-headed Swamphen, Indian Moorhen *et al*. When we got back, I got to know that Srikanth had seen a Lesser Adjutant and a Rosy Pipit.

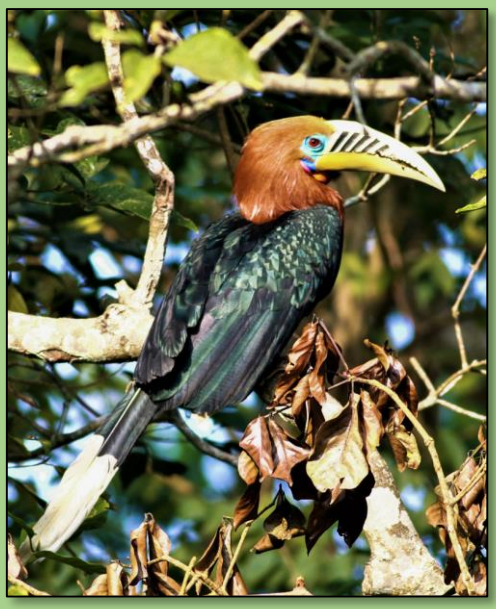
Rosy Pipit (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Grey-headed Lapwing (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

We got back to the hotel, packed up and started for our next destination – Latpanchar. We were in a bit of a hurry because we wanted to get in an evening birding session before dark. After a quick lunch on the way, we drove on, and neared our homestay after a bone-rattling ride on a road that seemed to be more of a bunch of rocks and potholes stuck together with bits of road here and there.

All this was forgotten in an instant, though – when our driver suddenly slammed on the brakes, quietly reversed a little, pointed to a tree down the slope on the left, and said "Hornbill". We jumped out of our vehicles, grabbed our gear and went rushing down the steep steps between those tiny houses that you typically see in these mountainside hamlets. Reaching a vantage point, we strained our eyes but couldn't see anything. Was the driver mistaken? But our guide pointed out a dark patch inside the foliage and said, "That's the Hornbill… Wait, it will come out".

After a few minutes of waiting, some movement became visible, and the palpable sense of excitement became even more heightened. And then it slowly came into view – first the orange-brown of the head and neck, then the yellow bill with deep markings, then a blue eye-patch – our first look at the Rufous-necked Hornbill!



Rufous-necked Hornbill (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

It was feeding on the berries in that fruiting tree and, over the next half hour or so, gave us some nice views – although the dense foliage meant that we would have to keep scampering from one point to another to keep it in view. The residents of that hamlet were quite amused at our antics.

As the guide said, many times groups spend 2-3 days there and don't get even a glimpse of the bird. So we were thrilled, and counted ourselves lucky, that we had got this Hornbill so early – even before we reached our rooms. We were to get it another 3-4 times over the next couple of days, but there is nothing so special as the first sighting of such an iconic species.

I had a bad half hour then, as my camera chose that moment to stop working – and nothing I did could get it working again. I thought I would have to spend the rest of the trip without a camera – this was a disaster. Thankfully, though, KK had a spare camera that he spontaneously offered me, and very generously allowed me to use for the next few days – a gesture that I will not forget.

As we drove on towards the homestay, we came upon some activity *en route* and decided to bird rather than spend good birding time driving up and down. We saw a small flock of the beautiful Sultan Tits – they stayed very high up in the canopy, sadly, and refused to come down – along with some unidentified Yuhinas and a Streaked Spiderhunter that Sravani located.

At this point, I must make mention of the fact that, although a relatively less experienced birder, Sravani turned out to be an amazing spotter, and was often the first to locate birds in the thick forest – I would not be wrong in saying that every day, she alone must have added at least a handful of species to our daily lists that we may otherwise have missed.

Sultan Tit (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

In the trees on the lower slope, we saw a Small Niltava, a Blue-fronted Redstart and a Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush. Some members got the Snowy-browed Flycatcher. We also heard the calls of the White-throated Bulbul, the Pale-headed Woodpecker and the Chestnut-headed Tesia – all species that we wanted to see and photograph, but couldn't – leaving us quite frustrated. The guide, however, assured us that we would try to get most of these birds over the next few days.

With this, we wound up for the day. We finally reached the homestay – a quaint structure with cosy wood-panelled rooms – and settled down for the night.

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Day-5: January 27, 2021: Latpanchar

Today was going to be our only full day at Latpanchar, and we wanted to make the most of it. The local residents had told us that the Rufous-necked Hornbill would return to the same tree the next morning between 6.30AM and 7.00AM so, making an early start, we headed to the site and were in place by 6.30AM – and, like clockwork, the Hornbill turned up at 6.45AM!

We watched it feeding on the berries of the fruiting tree for around half an hour before it decided to take off. It flew to a distant tree overlooking the valley, and settled in to rest. We waited, expecting it to return to the fruiting tree and feed some more.

Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker
(Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Meanwhile, a few other birds were seen – Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker, Spangled Drongo, Indian White-eye, Tricolored Shrike, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike – and a Malayan Giant Squirrel!

Malayan Giant Squirrel (Photo: Umesh Mani)

After having waited nearly an hour, the Hornbill finally took off, but went further away from us. We then decided to go ahead and look for the next big species we were hoping to see – the Red-headed Trogon. After quite a bit of searching, we were able to locate a female bird. But it was inside the thick tangle of trees and a fair way down the lower slope, so it was quite difficult to get good views. To complicate things, it kept flying from one place to another and back – leading us to go running up and down the road too!

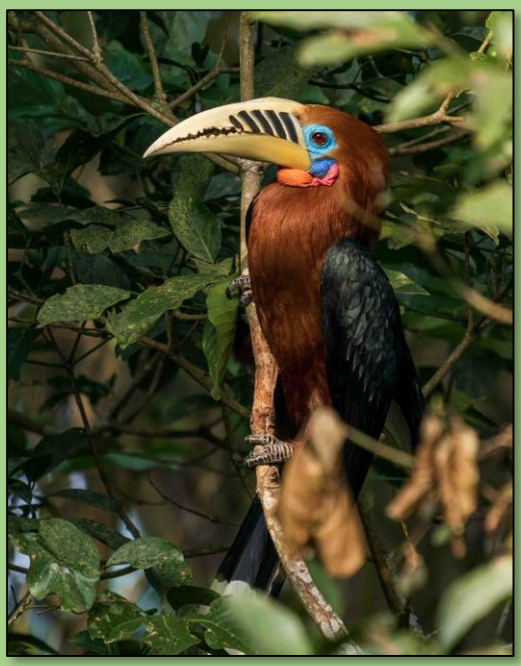
Red-headed Trogon female (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Streaked Spiderhunter (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Anyway, after around half an hour, we decided to move on. A Streaked Spiderhunter gave us excellent views, as it sipped on the nectar of a flowering plant right next to the road. We were looking for the Black-backed Forktail, which is sometimes seen in the area, when we came across a fairly cooperative Snowy-browed Flycatcher female, which allowed us to take a few photographs before it took off into the underbrush. Also seen was a Grey-throated Babbler.

Snowy-browed Flycatcher female (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

We came across the Rufous-necked Hornbill again on the same tree – it tormented us for another half hour before finally coming out into the sun and allowing us to take some decent photographs. It has blue eyelids! – something I had not realized before, though I knew about the blue facial patch – and with the pink-and-orange balloon at the throat, yellow bill with black striations, rufous head and underparts, and the glossy greenish-black upperparts, it is a veritable painter's palette!



Rufous-necked Hornbill (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

At the same spot we saw a Taiga Flycatcher foraging – which reminded us that it was already past 10.00AM, and we were also hungry! We headed back to the homestay for breakfast, but were interrupted on the way by views of a majestic Crested Serpent Eagle surveying the valley that seemed to be its domain.

Crested Serpent Eagle (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

In these parts, every house seems to take pride in maintaining a flower garden, however small. At the homestay too, while we waited for breakfast, our attention was caught by some activity in the flowering bushes right in front – we found a beautiful female Orange-bellied Leafbird feeding quite unconcerned – obviously used to human presence.

It took off after a few minutes, allowing us to finish our breakfast, before it came back again – and this time, we were able to watch and photograph more of its feeding activity.

Orange-bellied Leafbird female (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

We then went to an area where some of us had seen the Snowy-browed Flycatcher the previous day. We found a patch that had some good activity – a Streaked Spiderhunter, 3-4 Rufous Sibias and a Rufous-bellied Niltava.

Rufous Sibia (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Rufous-bellied Niltava (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A couple of Chestnut-bellied Nuthatches were also active. A little further ahead, a small flock of Scarlet Minivets entertained us for a while with their antics, before we decided to take a break for lunch.

Yellow-browed Warbler (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Latpanchar has some fantastic species, but not a great number of species, generally speaking. So, after lunch and some rest, we headed back to try and get another look at the Red-headed Trogon. *En route*, we saw a Yellow-browed Warbler and a Large Niltava. It took us another half hour before we could locate the Trogon. Still no male, though – we had to be content with further difficult views of the female which, as before, stayed inside the tree cover and kept moving about.

Large Niltava (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

By now it was close to 5.00PM, and the skies were beginning to darken, so we decided to wind up and headed back to the homestay for some much-needed tea. We saw a few Eurasian Tree Sparrows near the homestay. While we were waiting, a small raptor flew overhead which got us all excited – it turned out to be the Oriental Hobby! A good close to the day.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Oriental Hobby (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Later that evening, while we were hanging around after dinner, Srikanth heard the call of the Mountain Scops Owl and the Himalayan Wood Owl. We debated the idea of going night-spotting to look for the Owls, but the vehicles were not available and we had to drop the idea.

After a little souvenir-shopping, we retired early – tomorrow we were to shift base again, this time to Siliguri, and it was going to be a very early day.

* * *

Day-6: January 28, 2021: Latpanchar & Mahananda WLS

Making an early start, we started driving down from Latpanchar. Just a little while into the drive, the car ahead came to a sudden halt, and we realized they had seen something. We also got down from our vehicle, and saw what they had spotted – a Long-billed Thrush! It was foraging on the side of the road in characteristic fashion – hopping around in a small patch, flipping the leaves over and looking for prey underneath.

We slowly edged forward, taking photographs all the while – and were amazed that the Thrush allowed us to approach really close – not more than 5-6 feet away! A couple of times, it hopped up and away into the bushes above, but when we waited quietly, it came back to the same patch again and continued foraging. In fact, it was so unconcerned that finally we had to make the choice to move on, because we were getting late!

Long-billed Thrush (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Asian Barred Owlet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Blue-throated Barbet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

As we drove down the hills, we saw an Asian Barred Owlet, a couple of Black-crested Bulbuls, and a Blue-throated Barbet. As always, a number of Blue Whistling Thrushes were also seen *en route*.

Reaching Siliguri, we quickly dropped our baggage at the hotel and took off for birding. The first bird we saw on the way was a soaring Himalayan Griffon. After watching it for a few minutes, we moved ahead and reached a point that had a huge fruiting tree next to the road.

Himalayan Griffon (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Interestingly, the track that carries the Darjeeling Toy Train passed right under the tree! Apparently the train was not running that day, which was a bit of a disappointment – we had been hoping to catch a glimpse – but the birds more than made up for it.

The main target species at that point was the Great Indian Hornbill, and we got one right away. But it was deep inside the foliage and, while we waited for it to come out, we looked around for other birds – and what nice birds there were!

Another smaller tree nearby had a lot of Blue-throated Barbets actively foraging, and we watched them for a while. Suddenly the guide pointed out one of the Barbets, and said, “That one is not Blue-throated”. With some drama, he asked us to look at its ear patches – it was a Blue-eared Barbet! Possibly the rarest of the Barbets seen in India, it was a thrill to finally get this species. We took some photographs, although it was not easy to keep track of it amidst the clutter of the branches and in the middle of all the other similar-looking Blue-throated Barbets.

Blue-eared Barbet (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Suddenly a cacophony of bird calls from behind us caught our attention – the Hill Mynas had arrived! The Common Hill Mynas, seen in the Himalayan foothills and the north-eastern parts of India, have the golden ear wattles joined with the wattles on the nape of the neck, unlike the Lesser Hill Mynas seen in the south. They are very entertaining birds, and we watched their antics for a while as they hopped around, feeding on the berries.

Thick-billed Green Pigeon (Photo: Umesh Mani)

I spotted a Green Pigeon that turned out to be a very interesting species – the Thick-billed Green Pigeon. Sravani pointed out another individual in the same tree – and this one was a different species, and an even more interesting one – the Pin-tailed Green Pigeon! And to top it off, a Yellow-footed Green Pigeon was also seen.

Pin-tailed Green Pigeon (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

As we were trying to get some photographs of these Pigeons, the Great Indian Hornbill also decided to show itself – and we were really torn, trying to decide which one to focus on, and not wanting to miss anything!

Great Indian Hornbill trying to shake off a leaf
(Photo: Umesh Mani)

By now, a few more Hornbills had arrived in the tree. There was some comic relief when one of them plucked a berry that had a leaf attached – and was not able to get rid of it. It spent what must have been a frustrating few seconds trying to nip it off, shaking it back and forth, before finally managing to separate the fruit and toss it up in characteristic Hornbill fashion before swallowing it.

Blue Whistling Thrush (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Blue Whistling Thrush walked around on the railway line, quite close to us and a Lemon-rumped Warbler hopped around in the fruiting tree above. The Barbets, Hill Mynas etc were all creating a ruckus in the tree, and one of the Hornbills flew to a bare tree, finally giving us some clear views.

A Bronzed Drongo, a Grey-headed Woodpecker and some Scarlet Minivets made their appearance at another patch nearby.

We then headed to another area called Shivakhola, where we hoped to see the Black-backed Forktail, but that did not happen. Instead, we saw a Long-tailed Shrike, a couple of beautiful Black-crested Bulbuls, a pair of Rufous Sibia, and a small flock of Necklaced Laughingthrushes, that probably included both Greater and Lesser, but was too far down in the valley to be able to identify properly.

The calls of the White-throated Bulbul alerted us to their presence, and we finally got to see them for a short while. Unlike most Bulbuls, the White-throated Bulbuls are skulkers, staying inside the underbrush or in thick mid-level canopy – this makes it really difficult to see them well or photograph them.

White-throated Bulbul (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Snowy-browed Flycatcher male (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

The same patch yielded the Snowy-browed Flycatcher – but the female again, still no male! The guide explained that in this species, the male is more shy and rarely puts in an appearance, while the female is more confiding. Just as he was explaining this, though, the male did turn up, and we got a fair look at him.

By now it was beginning to get dark. We waited a little more, hoping to see the Forktail, but to no avail, so we decided to wind up for the day and head back.

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Day-7: January 29, 2021: Mahananda WLS

Today was going to be an important day – the plan was to try and complete as many of the target species as possible, so that the next day and a half could be used only to try and fill the gaps. So, after the usual early start, we stopped for a quick cup of tea at the usual tea point. We were shaken out of our inertia by a sudden burst of activity in the trees right in front – a mixed hunting party!

Olive-backed Pipit (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

The first bird we saw was a Yellow-vented Flowerpecker which, sadly, none of us managed to photograph. This was followed in quick succession by the Olive-backed Pipit, some Indian White-eyes, a Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, and a Spangled Drongo. This frenetic activity whetted our appetites and, quickly finishing off our tea, we drove on.

Black-crested Bulbul (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

We came to a patch where we found a pair of the beautiful Black-crested Bulbuls sunning themselves. They gave ample opportunities to take photographs. The guide then pointed out some activity in a tree that turned out to be the Common Green Magpie.

This is such a beautiful bird, and we had all been wanting to see it, so it kept us on our toes for quite some time while we waited for it to come out of the clutter. We were distracted by a Great Barbet and an Orange-bellied Leafbird, a Small Niltava showed itself for a few moments, and the Green Magpie gave tantalizing glimpses before diving back into foliage – we would have to wait a little longer!

Small Niltava (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Scarlet Minivet male (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

A Streaked Spiderhunter – which had turned out to be reasonably common during the trip – foraged nearby, as did a small flock of the lovely Scarlet Minivets, their colours literally glowing in the morning sun. We also saw a Hoary-bellied Squirrel – a very interesting sighting.

White-bellied Erpornis (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Then came the first major sighting of the day – the White-bellied Erpornis. We had been hearing the calls, and searching desperately for the same – although a member of the Yuhina family, which are naturally gregarious, the Erpornis is a shy bird and rarely seen out of the thick bamboo aggregations that it prefers to inhabit. It gave us several brief glimpses as it dashed around inside the bamboo, making for reasonably good views but very difficult photography.

The Spiderhunter and the Black-crested Bulbuls entertained us for a bit, along with a Himalayan Bulbul, before the next burst of activity – a group of 4-5 Large Woodshrikes – arrived and grabbed our attention. One of them found a caterpillar and proceeded to batter it on the tree branch in characteristic fashion before gobbling it up.

Large Woodshrike (Photo: Umesh Mani)

The Minivets were still around, and kept zipping in and out of view. The next interesting sighting soon followed – a Maroon Oriole – with an immature in tow! This was another species that I had seen earlier, but not got decent photos of, so I was naturally excited to see it. It stayed in the higher canopy for quite some time, though, and didn't really make it any easier for us to get proper photos.

Maroon Oriole adult male (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Maroon Oriole immature (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We decided to move ahead a little and try a different patch of forest. We came across an Asian Barred Owlet that allowed us to watch it for a while. A Maroon Oriole appeared out of nowhere and gave some good views – finally! – before it found a caterpillar and hopped away to enjoy it in peace. A Scarlet Minivet female had also found what appeared to be a dragonfly.

White-browed Scimitar Babbler
(Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

We had a welcome encounter with a White-browed Scimitar Babbler, a Spangled Drongo with a lovely twist to its tail and a Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker. A pair of Great Hornbills gave us a flypast and settled down on a tree, and a Black-winged Cuckooshrike appeared for a few moments.

Black-winged Cuckooshrike
(Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

We took a break for breakfast, and then returned to the area where we had earlier seen the Snowy-browed Flycatcher. As soon as we reached there, we found a female bird hopping around in the undergrowth. We waited for a while, hoping to get the male, but to no avail. An Ashy-throated Warbler was also there, creating further confusion as we searched for the male of the Flycatcher!

By now it was getting quite warm, and the activity had tapered off. After a while, we got to see another species that is often seen, but generally not easy to photograph because it is usually so hyperactive - the Little Pied Flycatcher. For a change, it did not move around much, giving us adequate time to watch and photograph it.

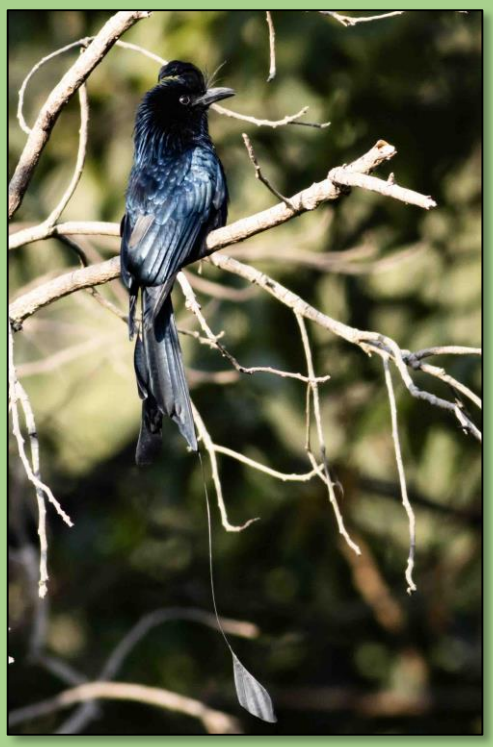
Little Pied Flycatcher (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush male
(Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush female (Photo: Umesh Mani)

After an early lunch, we decided to try another area. Some Black Bulbuls chittered in the upper canopy, distracting us with their calls and movement as they fed on some berries. A pair of Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrushes gave us some great views, as did a Golden-fronted Leafbird and a Lesser Yellownape. Another interesting sighting was a Greater Racket-tailed Drongo with a single tail streamer.

Lesser Yellownape (Photo: Umesh Mani)



Greater Racket-tailed Drongo (Photo: Umesh Mani)

By now, it was late afternoon, and we decided to take a break for a cup of tea and some refreshments – a welcome break after some frenetic birding and a good bit of walking.

Feeling recharged, we then headed to the same area where we had seen the Blue-eared Barbet a couple of days earlier. As soon as we reached there, we were rewarded with a sighting of a pair of Blue-bearded Bee-eaters, a little distant but at eye level. This was again unusual, since this Bee-eater tends to usually stay on top of the high canopy.

Blue-bearded Bee-eater (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Himalayan Buzzard (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

In between, the same spot also yielded us a Himalayan Buzzard circling high above and a Himalayan Griffon. The Blue-throated Barbets were still around, and active – but the Blue-eared Barbet unfortunately seemed to have moved on, and had been replaced by a Lineated Barbet that stubbornly refused to turn around.

Lineated Barbet (Photo: Umesh Mani)

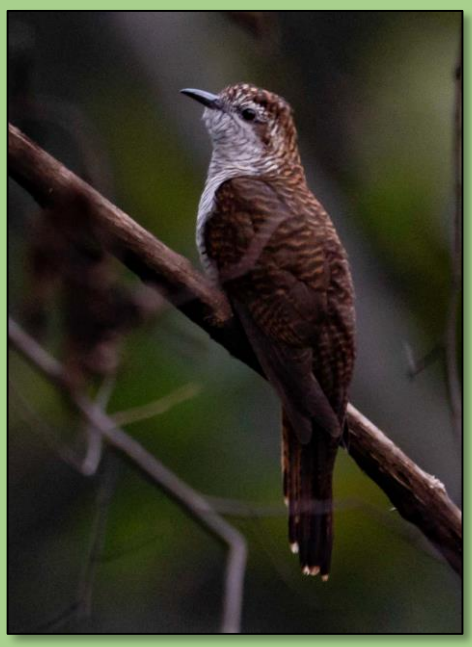
Common Hill Myna (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Also up to their usual boisterous antics, and creating quite a ruckus, was a flock of Common Hill Mynas – but they are such beautiful birds that it is impossible to be irritated by them!

We enjoyed watching them for a while, before our attention was again grabbed by the arrival of the Great Indian Hornbills. We have all seen those movies where the hero tosses peanuts up in the air and they pop right into their mouths – well, they have a thing or two to learn from these Hornbills! They went about their business of gorging on the berries, repeatedly doing the characteristic slow-motion toss in the air before swallowing the berries whole. We watched them for quite some time before moving on.

Great Indian Hornbill (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

We were nearing the end of the day, so we decided to try one last patch before winding up. A Lemon-rumped Warbler flitted about in the branches, but it was difficult to get a proper view in the thick foliage. We gave up after a while and walked along.



Banded Bay Cuckoo (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Then came the sighting that, for me personally, was an important one – it broke a jinx that had been following me for almost 15 years. I had seen this bird a few times, way up in the canopy; I had heard it innumerable times – but I had never once managed to get a decent photo, and I had begun to feel that maybe this was never going to happen. But I guess maybe today was the day – with our last sighting of the day – the Banded Bay Cuckoo!

We first heard the call coming from somewhere nearby, then Sravani spotted the bird in the middle of a tangle of branches – still high, but at least it was in the open. Another bird was responding to the call from somewhere close. The Cuckoo gave us plenty of time – it moved around in the same tree and kept calling for almost half an hour. I kept hoping that it would come down lower, and it finally did, enabling us to see it well. Since it was already nearing evening, the light was already fading, but I was still glad that I had managed to get some passable photos. We decided to wind up for the day and, as we started back for the hotel, I left happy that finally this jinx had ended.

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Day-8: January 30, 2021: Mahananda WLS

The first bird we were targeting today was the Crimson Sunbird, so we headed off to an area where it was apparently seen regularly. *En route*, we saw a couple of Lesser Yellownapes and an Asian Barred Owlet. A Green Magpie gave some glimpses before disappearing into the trees in the valley, and a Common Iora – a familiar face after quite some time! – made a brief appearance, as did a Black-crested Bulbul.

Another main target – the Long-tailed Broadbill – kept calling from the canopy on top of a hillock, but try as we might, we could not see it. The same was the case with the White-bellied Erpornis and, disappointingly, the Sultan Tit.

The Crimson Sunbirds were around – we could hear them calling, and see them moving about in the trees on a small hillock – but they refused to come down. I decided to go up the hillock to try and catch the Sunbirds there, but they chose that moment to come down, enabling the others in the group to get some nice views!

We did see a very cooperative Taiga Flycatcher, which gave us some very nice close-up views.

Taiga Flycatcher (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

A Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch came down to the road to pick up some nesting material.

Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Suddenly we got information that a Jerdon's Baza had been seen at a nearby location, so we got into our vehicles and rushed off there. We reached just in time to see it perched on a tree; it took off soon after and moved to another tree a little further down the valley.

Jerdon's Baza (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We then decided to return to the first spot to look for the Crimson Sunbird again. This time, we were fortunate to witness some interesting action, as the Sunbird hovered in the air and fed on the nectar of some beautiful flowers.

Crimson Sunbird (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

Some Long-tailed Minivets also put in an appearance, along with a Maroon Oriole. A Himalayan Buzzard gave some nice views, circling nearby for a few seconds before gliding off around the side of a hill.

Long-tailed Minivet female
(Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

We moved to another area to look for the White-throated Bulbul again – although we had heard its call several times, and got some distant views once earlier in the trip, we were yet to see it properly. This time we were successful, managing to get some good views for a few minutes.

White-throated Bulbul (Photo: Umesh Mani)

We had a sense that the trip was soon coming to an end, and we wanted to maximize the time left. So, after a quick break for lunch, we were back on field again in short order. We were now in Shivakhola, another area that was supposed to have good birds. The afternoon session started with an Olive-backed Pipit and another Maroon Oriole – we were quite surprised at the number of Maroon Orioles we had seen during the trip.

There was a temple on a river bank that was very interesting – the legend was that it was an ancient temple of Lord Shiva, and the statue carved out of a rock certainly seemed to bear it out.

Long-tailed Shrike (Photo: Srikanth Bhamidipati)

A Long-tailed Shrike showed itself for a bit, and a Blue-bearded Bee-eater gave good views. A Great Hornbill flew past, and its massive wingspan and heavy flapping gave a hint as to why it is such an awe-inspiring bird.

Great Indian Hornbill (Photo: Umesh Mani)

A Yellow-browed Warbler fed on some berries as did another flock of the delightful Common Hill Mynas.

Yellow-browed Warbler (Photo: Umesh Mani)

With that, we wound up the day and returned to the hotel. Tomorrow would be our last day!

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Day-9: January 31, 2021: Mahananda WLS

We had only an hour or two of birding in the morning before having to leave for the airport, so we got ready bright and early and started off. We decided to make one last attempt to get me good views of the Common Green Magpie, which had eluded us all these days – and as luck would have it, that was the first species we saw! In fact, we saw the Green Magpie with a catch of some sort, which we could not identify.

Grey-headed Woodpecker pair (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Greater Necklaced Laughungthrush
(Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

Giving it company was a Lesser Yellownape, a pair of Grey-headed Woodpeckers and a small mixed flock of Greater and Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrushes.

Spangled Drongo (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Spangled and Greater Racket-tailed Drongos were around, as also a White-browed Scimitar Babbler skulking in the undergrowth as always. A Maroon Oriole and a Golden-fronted Leafbird gave some parting views, and a Great Indian Hornbill flew past with its characteristic heavy, noisy wingbeats.

We stopped at a point where we noticed some movement in the thick underbrush, and after a lot of tracking, I got some photos of what we thought was a Chestnut-headed Tesia – but which sadly turned out to be a Common Tailorbird!

Common Tailorbird (Photo: Umesh Mani)

Common Green Magpie (Photo: Lawrence Mathappan)

We were now running out of time, so we wound up and started moving towards the airport. We decided to stop for one last cup of tea, and lo and behold – after all the struggles of the past few days, a Common Green Magpie came and perched right in front of the tea shop, giving us possibly the best views of the trip!

It was a great way to end the trip. The trip had been planned at somewhat short notice, and we did have some big misses during the trip. However, there were also plenty of big hits – iconic species that we had been waiting to see for many years, that we had finally got during this trip. It had given us a sort of trailer of the treasures that the North-east holds, and we resolved to visit again soon.

The consolidated list of birds recorded during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Gajoldoba	Latpanchar	Rongtong & Shivakhola
1	Ashy Bulbul	*Hemixos flavala*			Y
2	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*	Y		
3	Ashy Woodswallow	*Artamus fuscus*	Y		Y
4	Ashy-throated Warbler	*Phylloscopus maculipennis*			Y
5	Asian Barred Owlet	*Glaucidium cuculoides*		Y	Y
6	Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*	Y		
7	Asian Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*	Y		
8	Asian Pied Starling	*Gracupica contra*	Y		Y
9	Banded Bay Cuckoo	*Cacomantis sonneratii*			Y
10	Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*			Y
11	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	*Hemipus picatus*		Y	Y
12	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*	Y	Y	Y
13	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*		Y	Y
14	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	Y	Y	Y
15	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	Y	Y	Y
16	Black-backed Forktail	*Enicurus immaculatus*			Y
17	Black-chinned Yuhina	*Yuhina nigrimenta*		Y	
18	Black-crested Bulbul	*Rubigula flaviventris*		Y	Y
19	Black-eared Kite	*Milvus (migrans) lineatus*	Y		
20	Black-hooded Oriole	*Oriolus xanthornus*	Y		Y
21	Black-necked (aka Eared) Grebe	*Podiceps nigricollis*	Y		
22	Black-winged Cuckooshrike	*Lalage melaschistos*			Y
23	Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*	Y		
24	Blue Rock Thrush	*Monticola solitarius*	Y		
25	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*		Y	Y
26	Blue-bearded Bee-eater	*Nyctyornis athertoni*			Y
27	Blue-eared Barbet	*Megalaima australis*		Y	
28	Blue-fronted Redstart	*Phoenicurus frontalis*		Y	Y
29	Blue-throated Barbet	*Megalaima asiatica*	Y	Y	Y
30	Bronzed Drongo	*Dicrurus aeneus*		Y	Y

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Gajoldoba	Latpanchar	Rongtong & Shivakhola
31	Bronze-winged Jacana	*Metopidius indicus*	Y		
32	Brown Shrike	*Lanius cristatus*	Y	Y	
33	Brown-capped/Grey-capped Woodpecker	*Yungipicus nanus/canicapillus*		Y	
34	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*			Y
35	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	*Sitta cinnamoventris*		Y	Y
36	Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush	*Monticola rufiventris*		Y	Y
37	Chestnut-headed Tesia	*Cettia castaneocoronata*		Y	
38	Chestnut-tailed Starling	*Sturnia malabarica*	Y		
39	Citrine Wagtail	*Motacilla citreola*	Y		
40	Collared Owlet	*Glaucidium brodiei*		Y	
41	Common Buzzard	*Buteo buteo*	Y		
42	Common Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*	Y		
43	Common Green Magpie	*Cissa chinensis*			Y
44	Common Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*	Y		
45	Common Hill Myna	*Gracula religiosa*			Y
46	Common Iora	*Aegithina tiphia*			Y
47	Common Merganser	*Mergus merganser*	Y		
48	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*	Y	Y	Y
49	Common Pochard	*Aythya ferina*	Y		
50	Common Redshank	*Tringa totanus*	Y		
51	Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*	Y		
52	Common Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	Y		
53	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*	Y	Y	Y
54	Coppersmith Barbet	*Megalaima haemacephala*	Y		
55	Crested Serpent Eagle	*Spilornis cheela*		Y	
56	Crimson Sunbird	*Aethopyga siparaja*			Y
57	Dunlin	*Calidris alpina*	Y		
58	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	Y	Y	Y
59	Eurasian Coot	*Fulica atra*	Y		
60	Eurasian Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	Y		
61	Eurasian Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*	Y		
62	Eurasian Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	Y		
63	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*		Y	
64	Eurasian Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*	Y		
65	Falcated Duck	*Mareca falcata*	Y		
66	Ferruginous Duck	*Aythya nyroca*	Y		
67	Gadwall	*Mareca strepera*	Y		
68	Glossy Ibis	*Plegadis falcinellus*	Y		
69	Golden-fronted Leafbird	*Chloropsis aurifrons*			Y
70	Golden-headed Cisticola	*Cisticola exilis*	Y		
71	Great Barbet	*Megalaima virens*		Y	Y
72	Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	Y		
73	Great Crested Grebe	*Podiceps cristatus*	Y		
74	Great Egret	*Ardea alba*	Y		
75	Great Indian Hornbill	*Buceros bicornis*		Y	Y
76	Great Myna	*Acridotheres grandis*	Y		
77	Greater Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*	Y		Y
78	Greater Flameback	*Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus*			Y
79	Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush	*Ianthocincla pectoralis*		Y	Y
80	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus paradiseus*			Y
81	Greater Yellownape	*Chrysophlegma flavinucha*			Y
82	Green-tailed Sunbird	*Aethopyga nipalensis*		Y	
83	Green-winged Teal	*Anas crecca*	Y		
84	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*			Y
85	Grey-bellied Tesia	*Tesia cyaniventer*			Y

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86	Grey-capped Woodpecker	*Yungipicus canicapillus*			Y
87	Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher	*Culicicapa ceylonensis*			Y
88	Grey-headed Lapwing	*Vanellus cinereus*	Y		
89	Grey-headed Swamphen	*Porphyrio poliocephalus*	Y		
90	Grey-headed Woodpecker	*Picus canus*		Y	Y
91	Grey-throated Babbler	*Stachyris nigriceps*		Y	
92	Hen Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*	Y		
93	Himalayan Bulbul	*Pycnonotus leucogenys*			Y
94	Himalayan Buzzard	*Buteo refectus*			Y
95	Himalayan Griffon	*Gyps himalayensis*		Y	Y
96	Himalayan Wood Owl	*Strix (aluco) nivicola*		Y	
97	Himalayan Swiftlet	*Aerodramus brevirostris*			Y
98	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*	Y	Y	Y
99	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	Y	Y	Y
100	Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	Y		Y
101	Indian Roller	*Coracias benghalensis*	Y		
102	Indian Scops Owl	*Otus bakkamoena*	Y		
103	Indian White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*		Y	Y
104	Intermediate Egret	*Ardea intermedia*	Y		
105	Jerdon's Baza	*Aviceda jerdoni*			Y
106	Jungle Babbler	*Turdoides striata*	Y		Y
107	Jungle Myna	*Acridotheres fuscus*	Y		Y
108	Kentish Plover	*Charadrius alexandrinus*	Y		
109	Large Niltava	*Niltava grandis*		Y	
110	Large Woodshrike	*Tephrodornis virgatus*			Y
111	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*			Y
112	Laughing Dove	*Streptopelia senegalensis*	Y		
113	Lemon-rumped Warbler	*Phylloscopus chloronotus*			Y
114	Lesser Adjutant	*Leptoptilos javanicus*	Y		
115	Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush	*Garrulax monileger*			Y
116	Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus remifer*			Y
117	Lesser Sand Plover	*Charadrius mongolus*	Y		
118	Lesser Whistling-duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*	Y		
119	Lesser Yellownape	*Picus chlorolophus*		Y	Y
120	Lineated Barbet	*Megalaima lineata*	Y	Y	Y
121	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*	Y		Y
122	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	Y		
123	Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	Y		
124	Little Pied Flycatcher	*Ficedula westermanni*			Y
125	Little Ringed Plover	*Charadrius dubius*	Y		
126	Little Stint	*Calidris minuta*	Y		
127	Long-billed Thrush	*Zoothera monticola*		Y	
128	Long-tailed Broadbill	*Psarisomus dalhousiae*			Y
129	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*	Y	Y	Y
130	Maroon Oriole	*Oriolus traillii*			Y
131	Marsh Sandpiper	*Tringa stagnatilis*	Y		
132	Mountain Imperial Pigeon	*Ducula badia*		Y	
133	Mountain Scops Owl	*Otus spilocephalus*		Y	
134	Nepal Fulvetta	*Alcippe nipalensis*		Y	
135	Northern Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	Y		
136	Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*	Y		
137	Northern Shoveler	*Spatula clypeata*	Y		
138	Olive-backed Pipit	*Anthus hodgsoni*	Y		Y
139	Orange-bellied Leafbird	*Chloropsis hardwickii*		Y	Y
140	Oriental Darter	*Anhinga melanogaster*	Y		

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141	Oriental Hobby	*Falco severus*		Y	
142	Oriental Honey-buzzard	*Pernis ptilorhynchus*	Y		
143	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*	Y	Y	Y
144	Oriental Skylark	*Alauda gulgula*	Y		
145	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	Y		
146	Pacific Golden Plover	*Pluvialis fulva*	Y		
147	Paddyfield Pipit	*Anthus rufulus*	Y		Y
148	Pale-headed Woodpecker	*Gecinulus grantia*		Y	
149	Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*	Y		
150	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*	Y		
151	Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*			Y
152	Pied Harrier	*Circus melanoleucos*	Y		
153	Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*	Y		
154	Pin-striped Tit Babbler	*Mixornis gularis*			Y
155	Pin-tailed Green Pigeon	*Treron apicauda*		Y	
156	Plain Prinia	*Prinia inornata*	Y		
157	Plaintive Cuckoo	*Cacomantis merulinus*			Y
158	Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*	Y		
159	Red Collared Dove	*Streptopelia tranquebarica*	Y		
160	Red-crested Pochard	*Netta rufina*	Y		
161	Red-headed Trogon	*Harpactes erythrocephalus*		Y	
162	Red-naped Ibis	*Pseudibis papillosa*	Y		
163	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*	Y	Y	Y
164	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	Y		
165	River Lapwing	*Vanellus duvaucelii*	Y		
166	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	Y	Y	
167	Rosy Pipit	*Anthus roseatus*	Y		
168	Rosy Starling	*Pastor roseus*	Y		
169	Ruddy Shelduck	*Tadorna ferruginea*	Y		
170	Rufous Sibia	*Heterophasia capistrata*		Y	Y
171	Rufous Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*			Y
172	Rufous-bellied Niltava	*Niltava sundara*		Y	
173	Rufous-necked Hornbill	*Aceros nipalensis*		Y	
174	Sand Lark	*Alaudala raytal*	Y		
175	Scarlet Minivet	*Pericrocotus speciosus*		Y	Y
176	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*	Y		
177	Short-eared Owl	*Asio flammeus*	Y		
178	Siberian Stonechat	*Saxicola maurus*	Y		
179	Slaty-backed Forktail	*Enicurus schistaceus*		Y	
180	Small Niltava	*Niltava macgrigoriae*		Y	Y
181	Small Pratincole	*Glareola lactea*	Y		
182	Snowy-browed Flycatcher	*Ficedula hyperythra*		Y	Y
183	Spangled (aka Hair-crested) Drongo	*Dicrurus hottentottus*	Y	Y	Y
184	Speckled Piculet	*Picumnus innominatus*		Y	
185	Spotted Dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*	Y	Y	Y
186	Spotted Owlet	*Athene brama*	Y		
187	Spotted Redshank	*Tringa erythropus*	Y		
188	Steppe Eagle	*Aquila nipalensis*	Y	Y	
189	Streaked Spiderhunter	*Arachnothera magna*		Y	Y
190	Striated Grassbird	*Megalurus palustris*	Y		
191	Sultan Tit	*Melanochlora sultanea*		Y	Y
192	Taiga Flycatcher	*Ficedula albicilla*		Y	Y
193	Temminck's Stint	*Calidris temminckii*	Y		
194	Thick-billed Green Pigeon	*Treron curvirostra*		Y	
195	Thick-billed Warbler	*Arundinax aedon*			Y

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196	Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*	Y		
197	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*	Y		
198	White-bellied Erpornis	*Erpornis zantholeuca*			Y
199	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	Y		
200	White-browed Scimitar Babbler	*Pomatorhinus schisticeps*			Y
201	White-browed Wagtail	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*	Y		
202	White-capped Water Redstart	*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*	Y		Y
203	White-rumped Needletail	*Zoonavena sylvatica*			Y
204	White-tailed Robin	*Myiomela leucura*			Y
205	White-throated Bulbul	*Alophoixus flaveolus*		Y	Y
206	White-throated Fantail	*Rhipidura albicollis*	Y		
207	White-throated Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	Y		
208	Yellow Bittern	*Ixobrychus sinensis*	Y		
209	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	*Treron phoenicopterus*		Y	
210	Yellow-vented Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum chrysorrheum*			Y

Golden-fronted Leafbird (Photo: Umesh Mani)

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